

In Which Flo Meets Eleven by the-singular-peep

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-05-07 20:05:25

Updated: 2018-05-07 20:05:25

Packaged: 2019-12-16 23:11:02

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,742

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Hopper was upset that everything bad seemed to happen to his daughter. And now, as of yesterday, she was sick - and there was nothing he could do to fix it. But he would try his best, even if that meant violating the one-year agreement. [IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS OKAY SERIES. COMPLETE. PT 12/?. PART 11: "ELEVEN...ON DUSTIN."]

In Which Flo Meets Eleven

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March 6, 1985. Wednesday.

Hopper was pissed, to say the least.

Not at the kids, or Nancy Wheeler, or even Karen Wheeler for leaving the kids to go to the store. No, instead, he was mad at himself, for taking his daughter out of the house and heading off to work when he knew in the back of his mind that she was acting funny.

More than that, however, he was mad at the world. Eleven did *not* deserve this. His little girl, his tiny little girl who went through years of physical and mental abuse, his girl who just had a very traumatic year, his girl who had saved the world *twice*, did not deserve to catch another bug. And yet she had, and as soon as he arrived at four PM to the Wheeler household on March fifth to pick her up, the little girl was piled up on the couch with her head in Mike's lap and an old mixing bowl on the ground in front of her.

The others looked quite okay, only a little exhausted, and were piled around the living room with their eyes trained on the television. Mike was absently running his fingers through Eleven's unruly curls, and Nancy stood in front of him at the door with a nervous expression on her face.

"Everything's fine, just..." The oldest Wheeler child sighed and lowered her voice. "El got a little sick to her stomach. It was in front of the boys, and I think she's a little embarrassed about it, but she's been mostly okay since then. We wanted to call, but..."

"But you can't talk about her on the phone yet. I get it." Hopper finished. He sighed and put his palm to his forehead. "The boys okay?"

"Dustin's a little queasy, but they mostly seem alright..." She nodded, looking to the boys in the living room. When she turned back, Hopper could tell she was exhausted.

"Hey, Ellie? Get your things, kid, it's time to go." He called, stepping in and kicking the snow from his shoes.

Eleven's eyes looked up slightly, and without her normal hesitation, she began to stand up. Immediately she whined and put her hands to her tummy, and Hopper could see the uncomfortable pout on her lips. Mike was at her side in an instant, his pale hand on her shoulder.

"Are you okay, El? Do you need help?" He asked, and Hopper could hear the love in his voice. El let her eyes close and shook her head.

"Hop." She mumbled, and then she looked to her father figure. He understood the look in her eyes immediately.

"Alright, kiddo, c'mon," Hopper said as he walked over and leaned over in front of her. Within just a few moments he had her up on his hip and she was clinging to his jacket like her life depended on it. Mike looked worried sick, and Hopper hoped briefly that he wasn't a sympathy pucker. Before he could worry too much about it, however, Mike was pressing Eleven's boots into Hopper's free hand and had his warm thin fingers wrapped around Eleven's socked-foot comfortably.

"You'll be okay, El." He said softly, "You'll be fine in no time, and then you can come over and we can play Uno again," Michael then turned to Hopper. "Uhm. Make sure she drinks some water, okay? She hasn't really touched any, and she threw up a lot...I don't want her to get dehydrated, and..."

"I think he knows how to take care of his own kid, Mike," Lucas retorted from his place on the floor. Mike shot him a look before returning his gaze to Hopper.

"Just.. Let me know when she's okay?"

At this, Hopper smiled and patted his shoulder.

"I'll let you know. Thanks for watchin' her, Nancy." Hopper turned his attention to the older child and she gave him a little smile. He turned for the door, and over his shoulder El said a tiny, "Bye, Mike," before they were both out in the snow.

The rest of the day seemed to last forever. Eleven made it almost all the way home before being sick again, and, to Hopper's dismay, when she was she wasn't entirely out of the car and it had gotten all over the door. He had carried her the rest of the way to the house, had unlocked the locks and had gotten her clean and settled before returning to disinfect the car door. That night had been a long one, spent with lots of broken objects from telekinesis left unchecked and late night trips to the bathroom, and by the time Hopper and Eleven fell asleep side by side in the living room, it was two AM.

Hopper woke up late the next morning, and when he did, it was too late to have a decent plan for the day. Or to call in sick to work to care for his daughter.

Frantically, at seven forty three AM, Hopper dialed the Wheeler household.

"Hi Karen," He said, trying to sound positive. "I hate to ask it, but can you take El today? She's sick, and.... You're going out today. Okay. Yes, no, it's no problem. Yep. I'll give her your love. Thanks anyways, Karen. Yep. Bye-bye."

Hopper hung up the phone and ran his hand over his face, also running over his options.

He could call Joyce, but he was nearly positive she worked today, and even if she didn't, he didn't want to risk exposing Will to whatever this was even more than he already had been. He could leave her home alone, but, if the other times she had been sick were any indication, she wasn't safe from herself when she had a fever. Not with all the rogue floating items, rogue falling items, and rogue snotty sneezes (She hadn't quite figured out the art of the tissue yet). So that wasn't an option either.

The last option wasn't even really an option, and yet, here he was, at eight twelve AM on a Wednesday, in the car on the way to work with Eleven curled up in the passenger seat. Today, he wasn't scheduled for patrol and that meant, more than likely, the day was instead filled with paperwork. He could keep an eye on Eleven and do paperwork at the same time.

"Mike called." Eleven mumbled to her knees, which were still pajama-clad and were pulled up to her chest. Normally, Eleven loved to be out of the house on the rare occasions she could be. But today, on this one abnormally cold day in March, when her stomach was feeling rambunctious and her head was hurting and her feet were cold, she would prefer very much to stay at home.

Hopper glanced at her from the drivers seat, and when he saw how awful she looked he regretted his decision to bring her along instantly. But, it was the only option, so instead he responded.

"Oh yeah? What'd he have to say?"

Eleven let her feverish little head lean onto the cool glass of the window.

"Said wished I was better. Dustin is sick. Mike worries."

Hopper nodded and sighed. He knew it was a bug and not just a passing thing as soon as she was sick in the car, but that didn't mean he hadn't hoped. He was about to say something else to her, or offer comfort, or apologize for making her get out and about today, but she had already checked out of the conversation and had her eyes fixed on her shoes and so he decided against it.

He really did feel awful about getting her out of the house today, but he couldn't leave her home alone. Instead he had got her up and tied her shoes on her feet, letting her stay in the pajamas they had received as hand me downs from Nancy (a little yellow and white polka dotted two piece consisting of a dress like shirt and long, wide pants) and letting her pick a stuffed animal to carry with her.

This was terribly reminiscent of the long days in the past when he had bundled Sara in the early morning for doctor's visits, allowing her to pick one of her many stuffed toys to bring with her and letting her stay in her white little footies. It differed every day with her, the stuffed animal did, and one day it would be a plush baby doll, the next a hard plastic alligator toy wrapped in a baby blanket. With El, Hopper was sure that it would always be the same if they ever had to do this again. She had grown rather attached to the medium sized dollar store bear he had purchased for her when she caught the flu

last February, and he would be lying if he said that didn't make him smile. In this whole parenting mess, at least he had done *something* right, even if that something was a small cream colored stuffie with at least two stains from spilled syrup and a few from nosebleeds.

Eleven hugged the bear to her chest, it being trapped between her knees and chest and acting as a headrest, and Hopper reached over and put a hand on her back. Without even realizing he was doing it, he began rubbing soothing circles into the fabric covering the hot skin of her back.

"Don't feel good." Eleven grumbled into her bear. Hopper sighed, and for the first time in a while it was from sadness and not annoyance.

"I know, sweet girl. I know."

"Go home." She whined in response, drawling the last word out longer than necessary. Hopper felt his heart clench when he realized that she said the plea through tears.

"I gotta go to work, Ellie, you know I do." He said, his hand pushing harder onto her back to offer more comfort. "I can't let you stay home, but I can try with all my might to get us home early, okay?"

He heard a little sob.

"Okay." She croaked. "Halfway happy."

They arrived at the station a little later than Hopper was supposed to, and he was sure Flo would have something to say about it.

Sh*t. Flo.

Hopper hadn't thought of his coworkers. Of course, the year was nearly up, and she wasn't in any danger being out of the house, but his coworkers didn't know about her yet. How would he explain this?

He had the birth certificate, and Flo was a very trustworthy person, so maybe he would tell her the truth. That Eleven was his daughter from a previous fling that he didn't remember and her mother couldn't take care of her anymore.

Kind of true, even if that 'fling' was actually a run in with monsters and alternate dimensions and Government conspiracies that he could never forget.

Eleven was his daughter. Her name was Jane. She had only been with him for a few weeks and he didn't want to get rumors started before she got into school. He could do this.

Hopper stepped out of his car and went over to the passenger side, making sure El wasn't leaned against the window before opening it.

"You think you can handle walking in, Janie?" He said softly. Eleven looked up, dried tears staining her green-tinged face and her lips in a subconscious pout. She nodded, but reached for his hand to stand up.

Hopper walked by her side slowly, because she was *this* close to tripping over her feet as she clutched her bear and his hand for dear life, but when they reached the door to go in she hid behind his back. He let go of her hand to open the door, and she instead clung to his jacket.

"You're late, James." Flo said sternly, not looking up from her paperwork. Hopper sighed and let the door close behind him and his tag-a-long.

"I know, Flo, but listen, there's a good -"

"No buts about it, Jim, you are the *Chief* of Hawkins and you can't be getting here an hour later than your entire staff at least twice a week." Flo actually slammed her pen down at this and looked up, and when she did she caught sight of Eleven's fingers wrapped in her co-worker's jacket. She stood up, confused. "Who's this?"

Hopper winced at the concern in her voice and at the little hiccup of a sob El gave from behind him, but pushed his girl out in front of him anyways.

"Flo, I'd like you to meet Jane. My daughter."

Flo made a face.

"Since when have you had a daughter?" She asked, then smiled softly

at El. "And why is she in her PJs?"

El edged closer to Hopper and closed her eyes.

"Since a thing I had and forgot about after Diane, that she doesn't need to hear about right now." Hopper widened his eyes at Flo like it was a sore spot they would cover later and continued. "She's sick and I couldn't get a sitter, so I brought her in."

Flo's mouthed, "Talk to me later," in that upset, motherly tone before softening her features and looking to Eleven. "Are you feeling a little bit under the weather, dearie?"

Eleven opened her eyes and looked up to Hopper for guidance. He smiled apologetically at her, and she nodded to the older woman in front of her. She had asked a question, and Eleven had answered, but she still was looking at her.

"Threw up." Eleven said bluntly. The woman looked as if she expected more, so Eleven tried to elaborate. She held her bear in the crook of her elbow and held up her fingers. "Eight times."

Flo pursed her lips in a little frown and sighed.

"Oh, that's just no good, you poor dear. Why don't you go on in and pile up on that couch there and I bring you some water, alright?"

Eleven followed Flo's pointed finger and nodded, because her legs were feeling too wobbly right now to keep her up for long. She walked over to the couch by Hopper's office and sat with a *plop* before beginning to take off her shoes.

Once Eleven was on the other side of the room, Flo looked to Hopper and crossed her arms. He had some explaining to do.

Flo had been with Hopper from the first time he set foot in Hawkins, and she liked to think she knew most of what was going on in his life. She knew when he had a terrible crush on Joyce Byers, and she knew when he relapsed into thinking of his daughter and wife, and she knew when he had had a fight outside of work whenever he came in. Flo liked to think she was all-knowing when it came to Hopper, because, while he didn't wear his heart on his sleeve like some, he

was very easy to read by those who knew him well enough.

Flo knew him well enough. She had been watching recently, and had noticed that for the past - what was it, year? Year and a half? - he had been happier. Hopper had been cracking jokes, and teasing, and coming in fewer and fewer days with that scowl on his face that she had grown so accustomed to. Sometimes he would come in angry, or annoyed, or huffy, but it was different now. Had been different for the past year or so.

"James Hopper, how long have you had this girl?" She hissed, her arms crossed and her face urgent. Hopper shrugged.

"Not long, Flo. Her aunt dropped her off, I don't know, a week or two ago. Said her mom's got some kinda brain condition and they can't take her anymore. Flo, I promise you, I had no idea she even existed until-"

"No, sir, you have not only had that child for a week." Flo spit. Hopper looked at her and made a perplexed face, so she elaborated. "You have been comin' in here the past year and a half and you've been different, Hop. Don't think I haven't noticed it. I just didn't know what to think of it, and now you come here telling me you have a *child*?"

"Look, Flo, we had to be quiet about it." Hopper started, whispering like he was keeping this from the girl on the couch. He had to be authentic. "Her mom's in rough condition, and she's not been healthy herself. The second Hawkins found out about it, we'd have people all over the place wanting to know exactly how she came to be, and she's not been well enough for that."

Flo sighed. She understood that. Hawkins was a curious little town, always jumping on anything unusual to make something big of it. Most of that was because nothing ever seemed to happen here, but it had only gotten worse since the Byers boy's disappearance the fall of '83. The town had gotten a taste of excitement and wanted to keep it alive, and Flo understood why Hopper wouldn't want a sick little girl tied up in all of that. Especially after the government conspiracy that had surfaced last November and the rumors of a little Russian spy. She nodded at him.

"That's fair, I guess." She thought a moment, looking down at the floor. Her face screwed up. "Last year, when your sister left her kid with you. That was this one, wasn't it."

It wasn't a question. Hopper made a noise like he'd been caught and nodded. Flo put a hand on his shoulder.

"You can't keep things from me, Hop."

And then she was walking over to get a cup of water, and Hopper sighed a sigh of relief. She bought it.

The morning passed uneventfully. Hopper stayed in his office, doing paperwork and dealing every once and a while with an angry citizen or a concerned parent or a rebellious teenager. Every chance he got, he would step outside and check on El, sitting down beside her and checking her temperature with the back of his hand. She had been asleep almost all morning, and it was only at the fifth time Hopper checked her temperature that she opened her bleary eyes.

"Hop." She mumbled. Hopper gave her a stressed smile in response and helped her sit up.

"Hey, sweet girl, how're you feeling?"

Eleven screwed up her face, because she always did that when she thought. She did not feel well - she was shivering, and her stomach was flipping about with a pressured ache right in the center, and her mouth was doing that weird watery thing again - and by this point, she knew exactly what it meant. She hated this feeling.

"Throw up." She whispered, because just because she knew what was going to happen did *not* mean she wanted it to, and it made her quite sad to have to say the word aloud. However, she also knew now that when you feel like this, you must go to the bathroom, and in this new (new, loud, and *too bright*, she might add) place she wasn't quite sure where that was. And so she had to say the word, even if she hated it and hated what it indicated even more so. Hopper winced.

"Oh, sh*t, okay, c'mon, little lady," The chief helped her up by her arm, carefully catching her when her wobbly legs couldn't hold her

up. Eleven made a little whining noise mingled with a sob, because she absolutely *hated* this part. It made her feel nasty and unclean, and now, after yesterday, made her think of the *grossed-out* faces of her friends. Faces that looked both angry and pitying at the same time, like that first time they found her almost two years ago. Of course, those faces turned into sympathy very quickly, but during that fleeting second when it was just her staring at the face of Dustin, covered in her mess, all she could see was that disgusted, angry, pitying face that reminded her of being in the woods so long ago.

And now she thought of that every additional time she was sick, and it made her very upset on top of the gross feeling already residing inside of her. She was annoyed, to say the least. Annoyed and feeling quite ill, and Hopper was quick to pick up on that.

"I'm sorry, girly, I know you hate it, but it's gotta happen. C'mon, right in here," Hopper said to her, and he barely noticed Flo watching them as he led El into the single-stall bathroom and sat with her as she vomited.

El cried when she was sick, of course, because it was awful, and she felt awful, and having to do it was awful, and it surely tasted awful, but Hopper petted her through her tears and mess and even offered her a styrofoam cup of water as she was finishing up. She sat up and took the cup of water, not even noticing that the one who handed Hopper the cup for her was still standing in the doorway. She took a few tiny sips with shaky hands, and breathed in and out like Hopper had taught her before. It was about seven minutes just sitting there in silence, Hopper rubbing her back and her trying to take in more water, before someone spoke up.

"How are you liking daddy's work, hon?" Flo asked from the doorway, giving a sympathetic smile. Eleven didn't have time to respond before her tummy lurched again, and she had to lean over the toilet very quickly to accommodate it. Flo laughed a small, light-hearted laugh. "Oh, that bad, huh?"

"Very funny, Flo. She's suffering enough without your humor." Hopper smiled back at her, but his smile was pained. He rubbed his daughter's back and sighed.

That was it. He was calling it a day, and would take an early lunch to take her home. He was sure there was some paperwork in here somewhere that he could take home with him and get done there; Flo would be sure to understand.

He had stood up, and was about to take a seat by Eleven to dress her in her coat for the journey home, when it happened. Flo had gone back to her desk to grab a waste basket, presumably to place beside Eleven's couch, mumbling "New parents," as she did so, when the phone rang.

"Crack-house busted down on West 17th," Flo called from her desk. Hopper looked up from his place beside Eleven, who had just woken up and was groggily asking where she was, and grimaced.

"Send Callahan and Powell out," He called. He was asking Eleven if she wanted lunch when Flo continued.

"Already there. They need you to go file the report, Chief."

Hopper groaned. He couldn't take El with him; it was dangerous near explosion sights, and she probably wouldn't even be able to make the car ride. Plus the year wasn't even close to up, and he wasn't supposed to be taking her out of the house, let alone around town. But, at the same time, he couldn't leave her without supervision, even if her powers had been only affecting small, inconspicuous things this morning. (A spilled coffee cup and a few broken pen shafts weren't anything to write home about.) He was thinking fleetingly whether or not he would have time to run her by home or Joyce's (or if Joyce would even be home) when Flo spoke up.

"You go on Hop, I'll watch your girl."

Hopper looked up from his place on the couch and let out a breath he didn't know he'd been holding. He thought for a moment and sighed, because he wasn't sure if leaving her with Flo was such a good idea, either.

"Flo, you really don't have to.. She's a bit of a handful." He patted Eleven's shoulder and the girl startled a little, groggily looking up with a look of disgust and confusion on her features. Flo chuckled.

"Yeah, she looks it." She joked, "Really, Hop. I got four kids and six grandkids. I know how to sit for a sick one. Now go, before you get yourself demoted."

Hopper sighed, because he knew she was right. It would be fine; Eleven's powers weren't being nearly as obvious as they could be, and if the morning was indication, she'd probably just sleep until he got back. Still though, doubt was pulling at the back of his mind as he looked back to El. He put a hand to her forehead and winced at the heat, but she responded by pushing his hand away. Her eyes were open and clouded, but she squinted them at Hopper anyways.

"Hop." She mumbled. "Go work."

Hopper chuckled. He ran his hand over Eleven's face delicately before standing up.

"Guess I can't argue with that. Make sure she drinks some water while I'm gone." Hopper turned from Flo to his daughter. "Love you, girly. I'll be back as soon as I can."

El was already fast asleep, and Flo put her hand on her co-worker's shoulder.

"We'll be fine, Jim. Go."

Hopper looked to Flo. He looked to Eleven. He looked back to Flo. And then Hopper was gone, on his way to investigate the meth-heads of Hawkins.

Flo went back to her desk after he left, because it didn't look like Jane would be up anytime soon. It was noon, an hour after Hopper had left, when Flo noticed the small girl stir. She moved over to the couch and sat down, and smiled when Jane's eyes started to open.

"How are you feeling, dear?" Flo said after a moment, because the girl before her was sitting up slowly, and her bleary eyes were confused. Jane shrugged.

"Bad." She mumbled. Flo made a face of concern, and recalled all of her child-raising years before placing her hand on the girl's forehead. She tutted.

"You're a little warm, ."

Jane's eyes fluttered and she leaned forward onto Flo's hand. She didn't really know Flo at all, but her hand was cold, and it felt nice against her burning skin.

"How about we get you something nice to eat, huh?" Flo asked, carefully petting Jane's damp curls from her eyes. Jane opened her eyes and made a face. Uhm, no, she didn't want to eat, thank you very much. Flo seemed to sense this.

"Oh, don't you worry hon, this won't be too much. It might even help your belly feel better. You wanna give it a go? Only if you're feeling peckish, though. Don't wanna give you too much."

Eleven thought. She was feeling kind of hungry - not really in a hungry way, but more of a weak, in need of sustenance way - and if Flo didn't think it would make her *throw up* again, she was all for trying to eat. She nodded, blinking her eyes as she did so. Flo gave her a smile with warmth that only an older lady could achieve.

"Alrighty then, let's get to it, Jane Hopper. You sit here, and I'll be right back."

Flo smiled at the girl beside her and stood up, walking briskly into the break room. Now came the question of what could she fix that wouldn't be too much? Given the limited supply in the break room cupboards, there wasn't much - some three-day-old rolls, a half-eaten fruit cup, some coffee, a few hot chocolate packets and a gallon of milk that was close to its best-by date. A can of baked beans. Cheerios. A mystery-dish in the fridge covered in mold and saran-wrap, that she quickly disposed of.

Flo stepped back and put her finger to her lips, tapping as she thought. What in the world could she give to this sick kid that wouldn't come right back up? She opened the cabinet again and started scanning over all the cans she had noticed before her eyes landed on it.

Spaghetti-O's. She could make that work.

Jane had almost fallen asleep by the time Flo came back.

"Sweetheart, I got you some lunch," Flo said softly as she came back over to the couch. Jane startled up a little, halfway awake this time.

"Lunch?" She asked softly. She looked in the bowl. It didn't look like any lunch *she* had before.

"Yep, spaghetti's are always an A plus in my book." Flo smiled, sitting down beside Jane on the couch with the warmed bowl in her hands. She noticed the confused look on Jane's face, but didn't attribute it to the school-related phrase. Instead, she gave the girl a sympathetic smile and lifted the sharp chin with her hand.

"Buck up, dearie. If you don't like it, I won't force you. Okay?"

Jane thought. She was feeling a little hungry, and the bowl *did* smell appetizing. It wouldn't hurt to try, she finally decided, and reached forward. Flo smiled.

"That's a girl."

By the time Hopper returned, it was dark outside. He hated that it had taken so long - it wasn't often that something big like that happened in Hawkins, and between searching the premises and all the reporters that had flocked to the scene, it took much longer than expected. He pulled into the station as the last rays of sunlight disappeared behind the horizon, and frowned. He was sure El would be upset with him - or maybe worse, maybe she was even sicker than before, or maybe she'd broken something, or maybe she had scared Flo with her powers, or had sassed her and was in trouble, or maybe Flo scared *her* in some way. Hopper got out of his car expecting the building to be on fire and every object within it broken, but when he opened the door, it seemed....

Quiet. Peaceful, even. He walked in to the building warily, walking as soft as he could into the room.

"Flo? Jane?" He called, looking for his co-worker and daughter. Finally, his eyes landed on them - the two ladies were sitting close

together on the couch, Flo reading a magazine and El's head leaned heavily on the woman's shoulder, dead asleep. She looked much better than when Hopper had left - Her cheeks were less flushed, and the rest of her face had more color in it. She still looked a little sickly, but much, much better than before. He smiled and cleared his throat. Flo smiled and shushed him, and El stirred.

She didn't wake up for another ten minutes, as Hopper finished gathering his things and was rousing her from the couch.

Eleven groaned as he shook her shoulders and helped her to her feet. She clung to her stuffed bear with one arm and used her other hand to scrub at her eyes. She was *tired*. However, her tummy wasn't rumbling like earlier. In fact, she felt hungry. Really, truly hungry this time.

"Hungry," She whined slightly, still not fully awake. Hopper chuckled as he helped her into her coat.

"Oh yeah? What do you want?" He asked, happy that she wasn't refusing food anymore. Flo walked out of the room yet, but Hopper barely noticed. It was late; she was probably about to go home. Eleven thought. There was only one thing she trusted.

"O's." She said finally. Hopper made a questioning face and stood to his full height.

"What?"

Eleven thought a minute, scrunching her face and trying to think of the words.

"O's... Flo's O's." She said finally. Hopper almost laughed, but before he could, Flo was at his side and was shoving three cans of Spaghetti's into his hands. Eleven's face lit up, and Flo smiled as she patted Hopper on the back.

"I told you I knew how to take care of 'er, Hop."

Hopper was pissed, to say the least. At Brenner, for keeping Eleven so unexposed to the world. At the world, for letting Eleven get sick like

this. At Eleven's immune system, for drawing this illness on for a good two and a half days when it should have been gone in twenty four hours. At Dustin, who was better before he and Eleven were even home from work, who was completely all the way better that night while Eleven was still throwing up into a trashcan on the couch. ("Too many Spaghettio's, I think, kid," Hopper had said from his place holding El's hair back when she looked up at him with heavy breaths and pouting lips. Her sickly face got serious and she said, "No. Never too many O's.")

At himself, for not allowing Eleven the full day of rest she needed.

But that night, when he and Eleven fell asleep at ten thirty, curled up side by side on the couch for the second night in a row, he didn't feel any of that anger. As Eleven slowly reached out in a hazy, sleepy state, her eyes smiling before her lips did, and touched his nose, he felt nothing but love.

"Thank you, Hop." She said. "Taking care."

Hopper smiled, and spoke without thinking.

"That's what dads are for, kiddo."

Eleven fell asleep before it could register.